



**McHenry County
Department of Health**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Drinking Water Test Results Higher than EPA Standards

Routine drinking water samples taken at two non-community public water supplies – Harrison Elementary School (Wonder Lake) and Vaughan-Bushnell (Hebron) – revealed levels of arsenic in the water system which are above the drinking water standard of 10ppb (parts per billion) set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. These facilities immediately provided an alternative drinking water source to ensure safe water. Elevated levels of arsenic were found in the water supply of Greenwood Elementary School (Wonder Lake) in 2005, at which time a treatment system was installed to reduce those levels. Since installation of the treatment system, arsenic levels in the Greenwood Elementary School water supply have met the drinking water standard. Six additional samples taken from private water wells in the vicinity of Harrison Elementary also tested positive for elevated levels of arsenic. Additional testing will be conducted of private water supplies around the impacted sites.

McHenry County Department of Health is working with the State Health Department, the Illinois Geological & Water Surveys and Illinois Environmental Protection Agency in its preliminary investigation. There is no indication at this time that the arsenic levels in the drinking water are other than those found naturally.

Arsenic is a naturally occurring metal that has been found in some groundwater supplies in the Midwest. Community water supplies are routinely sampled by an IEPA mandate to check for a variety of inorganic compounds and metals including arsenic. If elevated levels of arsenic are found in community water supplies, treatment is put in place to reduce the levels to below the allowable standards. Chronic exposure to elevated arsenic levels in groundwater can lead to serious health effects. The Department has a pamphlet on its website (www.mcdh.info) about arsenic in drinking water and how to reduce your exposure to it.

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“Working to prevent disease and promote health and safety for all people of McHenry County since 1966.”